



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Cliff Lippard
Executive Director

DATE: 15 November 2023

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 2827/House Bill 2729 (Emergency Communications on College and University Campuses)—Final Report for Approval

The attached Commission report is submitted for your approval. It was prepared in response to Senate Bill 2827 by Senator Hensley and House Bill 2729 by Representative Ogles, which were introduced in the 112th General Assembly and, as amended, directed the Commission to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the routing and storage of emergency communications on the campuses of colleges and universities in Tennessee, including

- the ability of institutions to
 - store data and recordings relating to emergency communications and
 - store and retrieve complaints of criminal activity alleged to have occurred on campus and
- best policies and procedures, and consistency of messaging in this state, with respect to improving the ability of colleges and universities to store data and recordings relating to emergency communications.

Lawmakers noted that some schools direct students (and staff) to call campus police or security departments for emergencies instead of 911. But some campus police or security departments in Tennessee don't record incoming calls reporting crimes or other incidents on campus. This contrasts with 911 calls answered by outside dispatchers, which are always recorded and saved. The bills' sponsors expressed concern that not recording and saving calls that report crimes could hinder investigations or lead to schools underreporting incidents on their campuses.

In response to these concerns, staff identified three recommendations intended to improve institutions' handling of emergency calls and help make parents and students more informed and aware of potential safety risks on college and university campuses. Additional language has been added to the final recommendation since the draft report:

- **The Commission recommends the state encourage colleges and universities to record and retain recordings of calls reporting crimes and conduct violations to campus police and security departments by providing additional funding to help postsecondary institutions obtain or improve emergency call recording systems.**
- **The Commission recommends that the General Assembly require colleges and universities in Tennessee to publish to their websites' annual statistics for complaints of sexual misconduct and assault reported to their campus Title IX authorities.**
- **The Commission recommends that the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation develop a process to include statistics for crimes reported within one half mile of each college or university campus—a generally accepted walking distance—in its annual *Crime on Campus* reports and that colleges and universities publish to their websites the statistics for their institutions from this report, which they are already required to make available upon request.**